1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

coulu or salt-impregnated earth[1] has been dissolved. With the aid of a few mango leaves he sprinkles the solution all over the house and this act rids the house of its impurity and restores it to normal ritual status. Nowadays, however, Coorgs increasingly call on a Brahmin to purify the house on the twelfth day.

It is probable the washerman was employed as purifier because of his occupation. But such a duty is not consistent with the position he normally occupies in the caste hierarchy. For instance, he is prohibited from entering the more sacred parts of an ancestral house, like the kitchen and central hall, as he defiles them by his presence. If, however, he has to enter them in the exercise of his duties—at marriage he covers the ceiling of the central hall with clean white sheets—they are purified subsequently. But no such inconsistency exists in the case of the Brahmin, and the increasing tendency to employ him is part of the general process of Sanskritization of Coorg customs.

VIII

After having been given a bath by three married women, the groom is helped into his ritual robes and ornaments by the best man. He has to wear a white cotton gown for the *mūrta*, and this is worn in such a way that the right side comes over the left side. A red silk sash secures the gown at the waist. The ornamental Coorg knife, *piché katti*, is tucked into the sash in front, and the broad Coorg sword, *oḍi katti*, hangs from its clasp at the groom's back. The clasp is fixed to a chain which is tied round the groom's waist. The groom also wears a number of ornaments.

The groom wears the Coorg turban (*pāni manḍé tuṇi*) which is flat at the top and also covers the back of the head. He may not wear any sandals, however, as leather defiles. He carries in his hand a staff (*gejjé taṇḍ*) with small bells tied to it near the top.

The bride wears a uniform of red silk: a red silk *sari*, a red silk full-sleeved Coorg blouse (*kaḷa kupya*), and a red silk scarf which is tied round her head. She wears bangles, necklaces, ear-rings, and also ornaments on her ankles, feet, and toes.

The best man and matron of honour hold a white cloth umbrella over the groom and bride respectively.[2]

[1] The washerman uses *coulu* for washing clothes.

[2] Round about Mercara the bride and groom both wear a red silk veil during *mūrta*. In the southernmost part of Coorg, however, the veil is not worn by

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

(Xanthochymus pictorius?) forms a striking contrast to the former. Its branches commence near the ground, and covered with elongated dark green glossy leaves form as they ascend a gently inclined cone. The fruit of the size of an orange and beautifully yellow is rather acid, but it is eagerly sought after and eaten by the natives.

A graceful vegetable beauty of a different character is presented to view by the *Bilwára tree* (Mimosa) which with its spreading airy crown of tiny pinnate leaves and small white fragrant flowers is a graceful jungle ornament. The wood is very hard and strong. Near banks of streams and water courses the Coldera bush or *Fragrant Screwpine* (Pandanus odoratissimus) is commonly found and much used for making mats and umbrellas. In many arid places in the east and north of Coorg the *Dwarf date palm* (Phoenix farinifera) nearly monopolizes the ground. Its leaves are made into mats and baskets and from the small stem a farinaceous substance is prepared for food. A hillock of date palms before the hot season in January presents the appearance of, what we hope may be a thing of the past, a bored coffee estate.

At Fraserpet in the compound of the Coorg Superintendent's Bungalow there are a few trees of the valuable *Dividivi* or Shumach tree (Caesalpinia Coriaria). It is a small umbrageous tree and would do very well for coffee-shading, and its incurved oblong pods contain about 50 per cent of tannin, the price of which varies in Europe from £8 to £13 a ton, so that its cultivation might pay as a commercial enterprise.

Thus these eastern jungles contain a number of useful trees. I would now add a few trees, growing in the open, but thriving re.....kably well in Coorg, viz: the several representatives of the Ficus tribe, especially the Banian tree (Ficus Indica), of which there are some beautiful specimens near

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

seed. The seed paddy is heaped up on the north side of the house, watered for 3 days, then covered up with plantain leaves and stones, till it begins to sprout. The nursery ground has meanwhile again been ploughed and harrowed, and the water allowed to run off, so that the grain when sown is just imbedded in the soft mud. After 20 or 30 days the blades have attained a height of about one foot and the seedlings are ready for transplanting. Beautiful as are corn and clover fields in Europe, there is no vegetation there that surpasses in beauty the brilliant green of a rice nursery. The eye is irresistibly attracted to these bright spots and rests upon them with the utmost delight!

Regulated by the monsoon rain the rice-transplanting takes place during July and August. The women, covered with leaf-umbrellas, called Goragas, that rest on the head and protect the whole of the body, pull out the plants from the nursery, tie them in small bundles, which are collected in one spot. Meanwhile the submerged fields are repeatedly ploughed and levelled with the Tawe, "till the soil is soft as treacle, white as milk the foaming surface," when all the men of the house, placed in a line and standing almost knee deep in the muddy fields, begin the transplanting in which women are not expected to join. The bundles are conveniently deposited over the field; each man takes a handful of plants at a time into his left and with the right hand presses with great rapidity 6 or 8 seedlings together into the mud, keeping a regular distance of about 6 inches. Before the completion of the largest field an open space of about 10 feet wide is left throughout the whole length. This is the Coorgs' race-ground and offers right good sport which greatly exhilirates their monotonous task. All the men engaged in the work—and 15 are reckoned for a 100 butties of land—may run, but 4 or 5 only obtain a prize. Wearing merely a pair of short drawers, they are eager for the run, for which their powerful

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